

# **The Woman as Creator and Preserver of Folkdom**

by

**Josefa Berens-Totenohl**

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Translated by Friedrich August Wilhelm Erxleben d.J.

This translation is dedicated to my daughter G.

## Preface

An ode to the wonder of creation and Womanhood, this slim piece takes you back to the beginning of time. In powerful, yet simple prose (which I did my level best to translate), Mrs Berens-Totenohl gives a description of creation, its meaning, and the role both men and especially women are destined to play in it.

So powerful is her prose, that I can freely admit having been shaken to my very core, touched at the very heart of my soul, shed some tears over the simple, eternal truth of her approach to the subject.

In the hope of having rendered you, dear reader, a small service by making it available to the Anglo-Saxon speaker, I remain yours truly.

Friedrich August Wilhelm Erxleben d. J.

Swindon, UK, June '2025'

When as a woman, one gets to face this subject, one gets the feeling that it is unnecessary to talk about it; like it were as unnecessary as talking about the water, and how it flows, or of the light, and how it shines. This is how a woman naturally sees herself in the midst of this task. Why, it could be said that the measure of loyalty to folkdom<sup>1</sup> is *the* yardstick for the woman per se.

To us, folkdom is life, developed out of a common root, in the entirety of its expressions. We could also say: folkdom is the self-presentation of a people, the presentation and revelation of its shared joys and pains, its hopes and fears, its driving forces and power of will, in short: the shared expression of its life.

In its work, the teachings of folkdom are usually concerned with the external side of this life, with its form, with the appearance of the people's doings. It is this with which it is concerned; it weighs, separates and puts things in order; it attempts to cleanse that which is genuine and essential from that which is false and falsified, so that the genuine may grow and unfold. I explicitly talk of 'unfolding', and I deliberately borrow this term from the realm of organics, because the people is an organism. Its roots rest deep in the ground of the everlasting eternal creation, and its flowers, i.e. its performances, correspond with this ground. When we speak of folk [Volk, the people] and folkdom, however, we must start where its origin lies. We cannot merely talk of the external side.

Infinitely in time and space is how the life laws of a people take effect, determined and formed by the same blood. They take effect from generation to generation, so that it might appear as though these forms of folkish life expression be rigid, and that the relevant generations would have to merely present themselves as their carriers. Certainly, there is nothing more rigid than these living laws – may they remain unwritten eternally! – certainly, there is

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<sup>1</sup> Although the dictionary is giving us 'nationhood' for the German 'Volkstum', I decided to go with the more to the point 'folkdom'.

nothing more defined than these forms, through which a people experiences itself. We only need to see the holy earnestness with which the children, as early as in their first years of life, take on and execute the customs and actions handed down to them. There is nothing artificialised, but only that which has grown. Nonetheless, especially for this reason, despite all the steadiness, we must not speak of rigidity, because the customs and demands attached to certain days and their festivities are supplied with blood by the living stream that has ascended from primeval depths, old, primevally old, and yet, this is eternally new, eternally young. This does not only apply to the festivities and celebrations of children, but to all those classes of the people that are, like the children, elementary: to farmers and workers. Joining them is the woman who receives the drive of her life and actions also from the side of instinct. Nobody knows the beginning of certain customs and conventions. It rests in the beginning of the tribe, and thus in a foggy distance not lit up by any history, because as far as history reaches back, certain forms are already in place, and these forms already have their validity in the community.

However, we cannot talk of community and the people [volk] without seeing its centre, without seeing its heart, and that is the women, that is the mothers. It has been handed down to us about the world conqueror Alexander that once, he met a pregnant woman in the street, and that he made way for her, so that she would have her path cleared. This event was so strong and taking effect overreaching into the universal, that it has been preserved next to his great deeds and his enormous war glory.

Goethe speaks of that place where the mothers live. He has the seeking Faust, who ponders the last and deepest mysteries, go to the mothers, to that place, into the "untrodden, not to be trodden upon". In solitudes where one does not hear the step that one takes, this is where he has the mothers reside. Where the goddesses have their throne, this is where he imagines them.

In their great reverence for the woman, the mother of the tribe, our ancestors, the Germans, have created the Norns<sup>2</sup>, those figures of mythical women, in whose hands the fates rested, within whose knowledge was the future. And even the highest God, the riddle-solver Odin, they had him go to the Norn for him to inquire about the future of the world, the Gods and humans.

This great reverence for the nature of the woman and mother has been broken by Mediterranean and Oriental influences which took hold with us, and which did no longer see in the woman the same being as the Germans did, that being which more than any other stands in the service of the creator, but merely property obliged to the man.<sup>3</sup> The service of the woman which to us is the highest service to life has been associated with sin. The suffering of the woman over the child, which to us is the most touching thing in existence, which we recognise and interpret as the deepest wisdom of the creator, as the means only by which he fully renders the mother prepared for love and sacrifice until the end – because one only fully loves after one has suffered for that which one loves – this suffering of the mother has been interpreted as a punishment for a sin, as the consequence for the original sin. With this, the pain of the mother had its holy destiny taken away, it had its consecration taken away, and the mother's service descended into the sphere of uncleanness, the mother herself descended. The child whom she brought into this world, was branded by the sin.

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<sup>2</sup> If you ask an Anglo-Saxon encyclopedia, Norns are part of Icelandic mythology, just as much as the term 'Indo-Germanic' is offhand rendered 'Indo-European', and plenty more of these German-belittling exercises. All of this goes so much further back in time than place names such as Iceland or Germany, that 'Northern' mythology (as opposed to Mediterranean, Oriental or Southern) seems to be the most suitable description to me. Anyhow: Norns are the (female) spinners and weavers of fate; they reside by the roots of the World Tree (Ash), next to a well (Urd-Well), from which they water the World Ash. None can escape their verdict, not even Odin, the Allfather. As you can see by this description, this goes well beyond Iceland.

<sup>3</sup> This is of course a reference to the Jewish-created bible, and the boundless misogyny coming along with this Jewish un-culture of hatred and revenge against life itself. The divinity Mrs Berens-Totenohl is referring to has nothing to do with the devil, whom the bible is flogging as *its* God without quite saying so.

Never ever would this view have formed in the Germanic world view. Here, the woman was equally ranked, albeit different in nature, next to the man. He was the master, she was the mistress<sup>4</sup> of the house. And to associate the child with the sin would have been impossible. Venerable was the woman and mother to the man – given that she was so within herself. That she served the man in the house, that she served the children – in the eyes of the German man, this has never humiliated her. Why, did he not serve his housewife, and did he not serve his children by taking up arms for her and creating bread<sup>5</sup> for them? But the honour of the woman was his honour.

It is the view which can be found on good farm estates still today, where the German feel-for-life has been preserved unbroken, despite Southern and Oriental influences. When on such estate we hear how the jacks and maids simply talk of "the woman", then the old high belief in the mistress still reverberates right through to our times. And how should the farmer live and do his work, were he not feeling and carrying within him the awe before the divine, and where should the divine approach him closer than in that which unfolds through his woman, the mother of his children, in the creation of life. This is the destiny of divine will immediately, the will to eternal life from the times into eternity. This is the service of all women in all peoples and in all times. Glorious is it, grand and exalted. No other service stands so on the threshold between time and eternity, no other service may so mediate between time and eternity.

However, when the poet names the place in which mothers reside the not-to-be-trodden, then every human approaching him may well shudder and fall silent in awe. They may bow before the secret which the creator in his wisdom has placed around each new creation as a protective coat. Even the mothers

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<sup>4</sup> Here, 'mistress' is merely the female for 'master', naturally. Honni soit qui mal y pense (an immature knucklehead who thinks along sexual lines, here).

<sup>5</sup> Bread: the German shorthand for livelihood, sustenance etc.

have only some vague knowledge of the wonder that is happening upon them. But they may serve it with the entire courage to serve<sup>6</sup> which today, we call humility. Only in this way do they take part in creation.

But how are we to comprehend the eternal, to which the mothers are a bridge for us? That which is not-to-be-trodden is also unspeakable, unproclaimable. The language of habit, the language of the day, does not reach into those holy realms, and the everyday measures do not touch the stream of the infinite. Other words and other vessels must be mediators here.

This is where poetry sees its task arise. It is poetry and the arts which are granted to throw a glance into the mysterious chambers in which life resides. Imagining, they may view, and viewing, they may imagine. They may testify to this greatest ongoing, to this miracle of creation.

Like a mirror is capable of catching the sun and collecting its rays, to throw its light into the darkest corner, so may the poet, the singer, the sculptor as well catch the workings of the divinity like in a mirror, and carry its reflection wherever they please. The mirror, however, which they are holding in their hands, is the allegory. In the allegory, the human being can bear the divine without being blinded. In the image, in the symbol, the human being may behold the eternal.

No motif has been picked up and designed more often and with more dedication by poets and artists, however, than just this one of the mother with the child. This is where the in our people inherent reverence for motherhood is expressing itself. It may be said that the Madonna cult of the christian church is the origin and cause of this presentation. There is likely none among us who would deny the glory and fertility that this cult signifies

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<sup>6</sup> 'Courage to serve', orig. 'Dienmut', a word which I have never heard myself; needless to say that none of my library has it, either.



regarding life. Let us not forget, however, that the Madonna cult is a purely Occidental affair, and that it does not come to us from the Orient. On the contrary, we could assume that the Occidental human being had created this cult, in order to again elevate the honour of the woman who had descended to a lower level, namely to the level of the Jewish woman who associates with each birth uncleanness and sin. Christianity has now upheld the dogma of the inherited sin. One has not been capable of dissociating all women from the sin, nor to liberate all of birth from it. So, this one woman, Mary, has been liberated from the sinful conception, and she has had all reverence, which simply exists deep in the German and Occidental human being, heaped upon her. This one woman has been elevated into the closest proximity to God.

We can see now, that the German human being, from out of their nature, has time and again attempted to broaden and interpret the reverence for the Madonna to the woman and mother per se. Especially our most Germanic masters such as Albrecht Dürer, Schongauer, Riemenschneider, Rembrandt, and with him, many Netherlanders have walked this path, and it was the feeling of the nature of their own life that has lead them down this path. Thus, Dürer has created his German mother in the *Marienleben* or in the *Heckenwinkel*. It is the mother of our people. It could be the mother of any German person, and one certainly does not go astray assuming that the artist was remembering their own mother or the mother of their children in their works.

No different are things with the German minnesong of the Middle Ages. Where is there the borderline in the reverence between the Madonna and the woman?

However now, the woman never stands actively in the centre of this reverence, but she lets it happen to her, just like she lets everything happen to

her. A deep subconsciousness<sup>7</sup> has been placed around all of motherhood. It has thus received the greatest protection it could have been given, because only in the subconsciousness can that elementary force take effect that life requires to exist. All-too-conscious times are hostile to life. They destroy themselves, annihilate themselves with seeing eye. Right here belongs also the grand play of the sexes, which is of course only the prelude to the other greater one. What would the former be without the crowning touch of the latter? Where would be its meaning? The entirety of the love experience which takes hold of young people does not dissolve afterwards within the woman. She merely turns to the new being that she carries into life, but she remains elementary, defined from the side of the feeling, not from the side of the power of reason. If life were depending on the power of reason, it would perish. The power of reason is not life-generating, but is rather putting things in order in life. The power of reason separates, shares, distinguishes, arranges, mis-arranges. This does not have to be destructive. No, we see it in its right calling in the eternal quest for the laws of life, for the laws of the things and their context. Once it has found those, it begins its bold work: it starts and builds anew. It thinks "the thought of creation once again". This gives to the world its appearance. But always, it is about the things of life, the other happens for the sake of immediate living, however. The former is the destiny of the man, but the latter is the destiny of the woman. The man weighs clearly as to what aids his work. Only subconsciously sensing, the woman keeps carrying the dark stream of life, the stream that knows only wholeness, collecting and taking possession of all forces, even if it destroys the carrier, the woman. It is the destruction for the sake of life.

We have to consider this unity of the woman, if we want to do justice to her and her actions. Since the actual service that the woman has to perform fully

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<sup>7</sup> Blasted English language: the German words 'unbewusst' and 'bewusstlos' translate to the same 'unconscious' – monkey business as per my standard '1970's Langenscheidt translation dictionary. The one signifies the lack of any purposeful understanding (our case), the other is the medical term for being passed out. So I've recruited this weakly 'sub-'prefix in lieu.

occupies her, there cannot be much strength left for other things, and so, there is not much visible of her life on the outside. In recent years, I have often been asked: why do we women have no role model today who so visibly lives our ideal for us, as the men have it in the Führer? There is only one answer to this: the woman can never live her actual life visibly before all other eyes, never can she expose her life and experience to the public as the man does it in his work on a daily basis. The life of the woman, her deepest life, her creation service – this is how it must be called in an immediate sense – is eternally covered by the veil. That which makes its way to the external environment is *that* part of her doings and living which the public can handle, and this part has something to do with the nature of the man, albeit it lies within the realm of female duties.

Those from their ranks, however, to whom it is given to interpret life in poetry and art, those will erect images and symbols of the woman. In their poetry, they will show that which in reality unfolds behind closed doors; in their poetry, they will transfigure the life of the woman and mother, and only then show it to her in all its highness. By the so created figures, the woman can take her measure and test herself, whether she did serve justly.

At this point, I have to say a few words on the creative woman, the woman who is destined to speak out the unspeakable. Let us turn back our viewpoint to the most recent past, and for that period, let us compare the poetic creation of the man with that of our women. It was the time of rottenness and depravity of our cultural life by alien-racial Jewish art and literature. It was a time of falsification of all values, a time during which the heroism of the man was called stupidity, and during which the mother was ridiculed who took on herself the heavy load of having many children. It was the time during which the whore as the heroine of novels was worth more than the woman, the mother; it was the time during which the woman only had her value, as long as she was able to entice the man as a sexual partner. Once that was over, her existence was

rated more of a ridiculous affair. Back then, who spoke of the mother? Who spoke of the farmeress<sup>8</sup>? Who of the farmer? Who spoke of the entire elementary class of the people? Oh sure, they were spoken about, but the labourer was made a proletarian, the farmer a hick.

Even during those times, books have been created of a purity and truthfulness to life, full of awe. There were men who upheld the dignity of the German nature. But we women may count in our honour, that our poetesses did not take part in that [poisonous] contamination. An Agnes Miegel, a Lulu v. Strauss und Torney<sup>9</sup>, an Ina Seidel a.o. have created their main works during those years, and these works so naturally stand in the living soil of the people, as if there had never been a time of [cultural] pestilence.

Why was this possible? The answer has already been given above. Because the woman is elementary, because she is destined to give life, and her goal is the healthy life, because necessary by nature, she must want not the corrosion of life, but its unity; this is why at all times, she had to remain in the realm allocated to her, and do her work. In the unity of her nature and life itself lies also the law of her creation, lies the firmly unchangeable direction of her aspiration. Droste could write her poems today, she would not have to change them, they would have their sheen today as they did back then. Why, it seems as though her star would rise to full height only today. Karschin, too, would today,

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<sup>8</sup> Excuse the liberties I am taking with the English language, dear reader/readeress ☺ : in the German language, there is a female equivalent for *each* male denomination, e.g. Bauer – Bäuerin (= farmer), Pilot – Pilotin (= guess what) etc. This may also go to show how the English language has long lost its roots, since English and German have once been one and the same language. Nowadays, English is this mutilated auxiliary speak, ambiguous as Latin, contradictive as the bible, and almost as judaised as Hebrew.

<sup>9</sup> Since 'Strauss' is not a German name (though it's meant to sound as if it were), but an (almost) exclusively Jewish one, my educated guess would be that we are dealing with the rarest of phenomena here – assimilated Jews in Germany; the professional activity (publishing and politics ) of these Strausses here supports this guess. Jews who'd rather die together with Germans than live together with Jews. Yes, they once existed (supposedly), but they took the same fate as the Germans themselves during WWI and thereafter, abandoned, defamed and persecuted by their racial compatriots.

like back then, sing of heroism and nature; she would not have to re-tune her harp. It also lies within this unity with life, that the woman has virtually not at all taken part in the here and there outbreaking fashion streams of art, and that she has remained entirely indifferent towards the many nowadays overcome -isms. She was and is unable to change in this way, for she is yet fully given to the eternally same and calm stream which comes from the secret of the divinity, and into which it is flowing back again.

So much of the creative work and the creative life of the woman who, in poetry and art, does her work by the side of the man. In this, we are necessarily only ever dealing with individual phenomena.

There is yet another creative activity; it is nameless, and is being performed in the quiet of the house. I am talking about the most beautiful duty and the most blissful work, performed by the mother who teaches her child to speak. In long and quiet patience, the little human soul is awoken from the dumbness, from the slumber. The first little light of the mind is being kindled. There is no more beautiful moment to be experienced than that, in which after lengthy repetitions, the slurred sounds suddenly reveal a meaning. The door to the soul has sprung open. It is only a small crevice through which it shines, but now, this crevice is growing day by day. It is a long way until from the stammering the word is born, but this is true creation. And it is unfolding as creation, too. Oftentimes, it is as if with the birth of the child, the gift of a new language has come upon the young mother, because how else could she have found the wealth of the loving, caressing, comforting, encouraging words and songs; words and songs not recorded by any quill, and which are yet formed ever anew? It cannot be estimated what is being mutually created between mother and child in terms of pictures, language pictures and stories, when they have their intimate talks.

We may therefore view it as justified when the people [the volk] dedicated its language to the mother, when it calls it mother tongue. Therein lies a great honour for the woman and a gratitude of the entire people to her. We can compare with this the gratitude bestowed upon the man by the people, when it calls its soil, its land – fatherland, because it is the man who has to stand for the Lebensraum<sup>10</sup> with his life. But the language is gifted to the people by the woman.

This is where the boundaries are blurred between the creative and the preserving activity of the woman within the people, just as they are not sharply separated at any point at all. If the woman is destined to gift life, then this includes that she has to be intent on preserving it, otherwise all birth would lose its meaning. So it is only natural that the woman leaves the war machinery to the man, that she, instead of killing, takes upon her the office of tending to the wounded. This does by no means rule out that the woman and mother, understanding the necessity of sacrificial death, lets the man move away from her, that she gives up the son, and that she takes all suffering upon herself, the suffering that, in its extended duration, is often harder to take than the short trouble of dying.

To us, life means more than simply the existence as such. It also entails all functions of existence, the entirety of the play of forces. Here, too, by necessity of nature, the woman aspires to that which has been achieved, she wishes it to be permanent. The man is duty-bound to penetrate into the unknown, to acquire new realisations, to fight for new forms and conditions, in order to improve that which already exists, that which has already become.

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<sup>10</sup> 'Lebensraum': literally 'room to live', a term much abused to slander Germans for allegedly wanting to conquer the entire world. Do yourself a favour and have a look at any world map, and see how silly most of us have been to believe this hogwash, especially considering that as late as '1935', Germany had (was permitted by the Versailles piiss treaty) a standing army of 100.000 men with no artillery, no tanks, no war planes and no war ships, but surrounded by enemies on almost all sides outnumbering Germany's 'forces' by at least 50:1.

What he has achieved in his aspiration – the woman takes it and makes it simple. She transforms it into goods of life by which she rules child and house. Soon, we notice in the young person, who dares venture the first steps out of the house into the outside world, whether the mother has been capable of fulfilling those demands. We notice whether the boy or girl bring with them from home an initially acquired form. We notice the upbringing<sup>11</sup>, as it is being said, and behind it, we recognise the educating work of the mother. What she has moulded on the child is indestructible, and all later moulding is in some way permeated or darkened by the former.

By what means is the woman capable of fulfilling her task?

Here, we must distinguish between the rural woman and the town woman. The former has at her disposal: house and home, garden, field and woods, neighbourhood with everything that these encompass. It is not difficult to care for and preserve overcome things helped and guided by those means, because the nature of this world, in detail as much as in general, strives for preservation. Each of those [house, home etc.] has its own life and stands in mutual relations to the family. The farmer with everything that he is and has, stands in the midst of the world. He has its [the world's] life's law and he is close to life, close to the Earth as the world itself is. His work is unchangeable, and his task is eternal. The form of the work may vary, depending on the progress of technology – its nature remains. This is the reason why the distance between the farmer and the farmeress is much closer than e.g. that between a worker in town and his wife. Farmer and farmeress work the same work, not so the labourer and his wife.

Now, that the countryside and its people reject all novelties, has often been interpreted as a limitation, also often as stubbornness. Both is wrong. Everything that has grown wants durability, wants it by all means. In the

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<sup>11</sup> Orig.: 'Kinderstube' = 'nursery'



countryside, this can be seen in all areas of life, whether we think of abode, attire, appliances and other everyday things, the ways of work, the way to celebrate festivities, festivities in the family or in the community of the village. Before anything, this happens in the language, the dialect nurtured by the farmer – and which he wants to nurture a great deal more still. For it is yet a well of symbolism and truth, full of savoury beauty. Today, we have happily arrived again at that point, where we have a sense for the beauty and the value of the true, honest life. Today, we find the varnish ugly again, and we find it ugly when the farmer drags the ways of the town into his home and his life, and denies himself that which is his very own. Today, we know that the countryside is the grand health spa for life, the health spa for the people, by whose fresh waters everybody finds comfort when they have grown tired of the town. The overly pointed fashionable Western civilisation to which the town easily surrenders finds an opponent in the life of the farmer and farmeress, provided they present themselves to be of their own growth, which has its own yardstick, and judges by this yardstick.

The woman of the town does not stand on such a solid, safe plane. Therefore, her task of which we speak here is more difficult to solve, and she will, at any rate, only be capable of solving it to a reduced extent. The town is more adaptable to change. The reason lies in the overpowering force with which the town takes hold of the people from the outside, in the force with which it constantly attacks and absorbs the individual life, the inner life of its people.

A little while ago, I have gone by train from Altenhundem [the sticks] to Hagen-Essen [Ruhrgebiet (=Ruhr area): one of the most densely populated/industrialised areas on Earth]. At a small Sauerland station [the sticks], around thirty mothers came on board who have been in the countryside for four weeks for recreation. The mothers were cheerful, they were chatting about how good they have had it, and now they were looking forward to



returning home and seeing their families. It didn't take long, and a woman started a song. It was a folk song. Soon, there was a cheerful sing-song everywhere. I thought: back then [WWI], when did we hear mothers sing? Back then, when did we see mothers at all? This train ride was really something to enjoy. Then came Hohenlimburg [outskirts of the Ruhrgebiet moloch]. We had barely left it, then, all of a sudden, the first [pop music] hit came up. The same woman who started the first folk song, sang: "*Du kannst nicht treu sein*" ["You cannot be faithful/loyal"]<sup>12</sup> The others joined. Before, in the green mountains, no [pop music] hit had come up. – How was this possible? In Hohenlimburg, the proximity to Hagen was palpable. The big town can be perceived. The industrialised area. It took hold of its people. Involuntarily, the women followed that law, without having the first idea about it.

It would be blind now, if we wanted to view the countryside as the only place of life, and if we wanted to negate the great heaping up of the people in the towns. Mighty peoples create broad circles of their powers, and so, great focal points of life form, in which it [the people] conglomerates to greatest performances and greatest downfalls at the same time. Glory and decay are the two poles of the big city. All spiritual tensions are forcing themselves towards this centre, they discharge, they spark up there in the face of humanity, they tower up there to a pinnacle, visible from afar, and they throw their light back upon the land of their origin, there, where their beginning lies. For we cannot view the [rural] land as anything but the beginning, as the motherly lap of life, strength-giving, strength-preserving in its unity. We cannot view the town any different, as the last and highest expression and development of this strength, as the male effect and enhancement of strength to the point of fulfilment of its [the town's] most inherent law.

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<sup>12</sup> The kind of crap promoting adultery; films of those days are crawling with this garbage, e.g. "I don't rate love, I don't rate faithfulness/loyalty" – it's wholesome insanity.

Here, we must now ask for the woman, for the woman in town and her duty to folkdom. In the town, there is barely any home in the rural sense. The percentage of people who have spent their entire childhood and youth in one and the same town, or who can even remain there for their entire lives, is small. How many abodes can the individual person count already, in which they had lived before they have grown up! And if they leave an apartment, another one moves in, and this other one changes it in their way. Immediately, everything is being erased that somebody else had somehow held dear. Homelessness is the fate of the town person, change from place to place.

Yet, nobody can evade the question of home. Every human being is in search for a place of rest, from which they can start when they want an overview of their path. The person from the countryside has a very small world, which has its prescribed form and its immovable life through long times and chains of generations. So, every time we ask them for their home, we will always be told the descriptions of that world and their little adventures in that world. – If we ask a town person for their home, they begin with their mother. They do not even begin with the abode, this is of how little significance the place is, this is of how little significance the world of the town is as a home. Only later, when the young person themselves take a position towards the world of the town, then the place begins forming into an idea of home. What had been previously, is entirely filled out by the mother. Add to this the father, and how he returns home to the family for hours from work, from the shift, from a business trip etc. The resting point is the mother, however.

But woe, if the mother in town has no grasp of this task! If she is [mentally] too small, if her inner life is too weak for this task of being a home! Since she has no external means of preservation at her disposal, other than the rural woman, she must find everything within herself. This is a struggle in which there are [small] victories, but no [overall] victory, because without

interruption, the ocean of changes and transformations is surging against the woman from the outside, and we can only ask: for how long are you capable of rescuing your own nature in this eternal surge? – Let another example fill this place.

I received a letter from the big city, written by a girl or a woman, which showed to me that she who wrote it had well and very seriously read my books. She had indeed quite correctly viewed the characters of the books, understood their actions bar one: that Wulf's daughter had returned back home under the roof of her father's house, to carry on living there with her father. She wrote: "I consider this weakness. Magdlene had to either kill herself, or go out on the country road." Only a town person could have written like this, who knows nothing anymore of farmerdom and the unity of house and home. Magdlene is a farmeress. However, a farmeress never ever leaves the place of her duty. She stands in her place until she breaks down. She never shirks her duty, not even when fulfilling it is difficult, if it is more difficult than death. And what meaning would her love have had, and the hope for the child? – We may assume that this letter writer was seeing quite with the eyes of the town, perhaps the eyes of movies, for which such ending would have had more of an effect. – By this example, the two worlds become visible, which encompass our people in its entirety. But how big the task of the woman is within each of these worlds – to demonstrate this was my goal.

Coming to the end, I would like to evoke before your soul once more that picture of the woman, which our German ancestors have created out of their high reverence for the woman, the image of the Norn. Peoples always create their signs and symbols from out of a deep truth, and these signs are confession and obligation at the same time, obligation for all of us who directly stand in the service to life. Let us be worthy of the exalted interpretation, which our ancestors have given their women with the image of the Norn!

The Norn speaks<sup>13</sup>:

Ich bin nicht tot.

Der Götter Dämmerungen

berühren meinen Scheitel nicht.

Um mein Gesicht

fließt ewig unbezwungen

und unbewegt des Lebens Morgenrot.

Der Zeiten kleines wechselndes Geschick

wirkt Wahn und Not,

doch kein Gebot

wirft es auf mich zurück.

Ich steh am Pol, um den die Sterne kreisen,

um den der Schöpfung rauschend Rad sich

schwingt;

ich steh am Quell, der aus der Gottheit springt, I stand by the well that from divinity springs,

ihm wanderweiten dunklen Weg zu weisen. to show it the wanderwide dark path.

I am not dead.

The twilights of the Gods

do not touch my parting.

About my face

flows eternally unconquered

and unmoved life's morning red.

The times' small changing fate

effects delusion and need,

yet no decree

throws it back upon me.

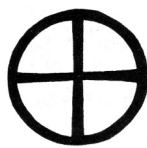
I stand by the pole, around which the stars

turn,

around which creation's rushing wheel swings;

I stand by the well that from divinity springs,

to show it the wanderwide dark path.



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<sup>13</sup> This is where my wisdom is being outdone: I usually make a point of translating even rhyme, but I freely admit that these here lines overtax my translation skills by some margin.